

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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----- 017159

R 280957Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8420

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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EUCOM

USAREUR

USAFE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: HESSEN ELECTION RESULTS

REF: FRANKFURT'S 6907

EUCOM, USAREUR AND USAFE FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: AS ANTICIPATED, CDU EMERGED FROM OCTOBER 27
ELECTIONS AS LARGEST PARTY IN HESSEN PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
FOR FIRST TIME, BUT SPD/FDP COALITION PARTNERS RETAIN
NARROW GOVERNING MAJORITY. FDP LOSSES HEAVIER THAN
EXPECTED. FDP LOSSES AND CDU GAINS PARTICULARLY STRIKING
IN SOUTH HESSEN METROPOLITAN AREAS, WHERE CDU CAPTURED
SEVEN OF EIGHT DIRECT SEATS IN FRANKFURT. AND SUMMARY.
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2. DESPITE FOUL WEATHER ON ELECTION DAY, TURNOUT WAS GREATER THAN 1970 ELECTIONS FOR PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE (LANDTAG). CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (CDU) GAIN OF 7.6 PERCENT (TO 47.3 PERCENT) AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LOSS OF 2.7 PERCENT (TO 43.2 PERCENT) CONFORMED TO PREDICTIONS OF POLLSTERS AND OBSERVERS. HOWEVER, FREE DEMOCRATIC (FDP) LOSS OF 2.7 PERCENT (TO 7.4 PERCENT) WAS GREATER THAN ANY PROGNOSIS OF WHICH WE WERE AWARE. MANY SPD VOTES WERE "LEANED" TO FDP IN 1970 TO BOLSTER FLEDGLING SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION IN BONN, BUT OPINION POLLS HAD TENDED TO SUPPORT FDP CONTENTION THAT PARTY HAD IN MEANTIME BUILT UP TO TEN PERCENT LEVEL ON ITS OWN. HESSEN FDP'S GOOD SHOWING IN 1972 BUNDESTAG ELECTION ALSO SUPPORTED THIS VIEW. FDP'S RECENTLY ADOPTED "CHURCH PAPER" PLAYED RELATIVELY LITTLE ROLE IN HESSEN, WHICH LARGELY PROTESTANT AND WHICH HAS STRONG ANTI-CLERICAL TRADITION. RIGHTIST NPD GOT ONE PERCENT, COMMUNIST GROUPS WON TOTAL OF 1.1 PERCENT.

3. IN NEW LANDTAG CDU WILL HAVE 53 SEATS (PLUS SEVEN), SPD 49 (MINUS FOUR), AND FDP EIGHT (MINUS THREE). SPD/FDP GOVERNING COALITION MAJORITY THUS REDUCED TO FOUR SEATS (FROM PREVIOUS MARGIN OF EIGHTEEN SEATS). FDP LEADERS GIVE EVERY INDICATION OF CONTINUING COALITION DESPITE CDU CHAIRMAN DREGGER'S REITERATION ON ELECTION EVE OF OFFER OF VETO RIGHT FOR FDP OVER HESSEN VOTE IN BUNDES-RAT IF FDP WOULD FORM COALITION WITH CDU. ELECTION RESULTS WILL NOT REPEAT NOT STRENGTHEN FDP BARGAINING POSITION.

4. AS LARGEST PARTY IN HESSEN LANDTAG FOR FIRST TIME, CDU CAN CLAIM LANDTAG PRESIDENCY, WHICH WILL EFFECTIVELY INCREASE COALITION MAJORITY BY ONE SEAT. THERE WAS REPORT THAT DREGGER WOULD UNCHARACTERISTICALLY CLAIM THIS PROTOCOLARY POSITION FOR HIMSELF, BUT HE STATED FLATLY AFTER ELECTION RESULTS ANNOUNCED THAT HE NOT INTERESTED IN ANY JOB IN WIESBADEN OTHER THAN MINISTER-PRESIDENT. HE WILL THUS REMAIN IN BUNDESTAG AND PRESUMABLY SEEK TO TRANSLATE PERSONAL TRIUMPH IN HESSEN INTO GREATER INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS. HE INCREASINGLY COUPLED WITH STRAUSS AS PERSONIFYING AGGRESSIVE, RIGHT-WING, NATIONALISTIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPROACH; AND TWO MEN CAN POINT TO SUCCESSES IN 1972 BUNDESTAG AND 1974 LANDTAG ELECTIONS.

5. TO EXTENT THAT CDU SUCCEEDED IN MAKING ELECTION DIRECT CONTEST BETWEEN DREGGER AND MINISTER-PRESIDENT OSSWALD, WHICH FORMER CLEARLY WON, OSSWALD IS PRINCIPAL LOSER. HESSEN SPD FORTUNES HAVE DECLINED STEADILY SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE, AND IMPRESSION THAT HE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE HAS

GAINED ACCEPTANCE. PROSPECTS NOW CONSIDERABLY GREATER THAT HE WILL BE REPLACED WELL BEFORE NEXT (1978) LANDTAG ELECTIONS.

6. CDU GAINS AND FDP LOSSES PARTICULARLY NOTABLE IN SOUTH HESSEN WHERE "LOANED" VOTES TO FDP IN 1970, LEFTIST NATURE OF SPD, AND FREQUENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIOLENCE IN FRANKFURT MAY HAVE HAD SPECIAL IMPACT. CDU WON SEVEN OF EIGHT DIRECT SEATS IN FRANKFURT CONSTITUENCIES, AND WELL KNOWN SPD LANDTAG DEPUTIES ALSO UPSET IN WIESBADEN AND DARMSTADT. SPD LOSSES GENERALLY HEAVIER IN CITIES, PRESUMABLY REFLECTING CONCERN OVER GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT. ESTIMATES BY FRG ECONOMIC RESERACH INSTITUTES IN ELECTION WEEK THAT JOBLESS WOULD REACH ONE MILLION BY WINTER CONSTITUTED BITTER FLOW FOR COALITION PARTIES. GOVERNMENT-BUNDESBANK MEASURES ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 24 TO EASE MONEY RATES, RISKING A LITTLE MORE INFLATION TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT, CAME TOO LATE FOR HESSEN LANDTAG ELECTIONS. SPD PERCENTAGE LOSS IN FRANKFURT LESS THAN IN REST OF LAND, SO ARNDT'S PERSONAL POSITION NOT DAMAGED.HARLAN

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